Isaac Alfred Isaacs (1855-1948)

Member for Indi (Victoria) 1901-1906

Isaac Isaacs was born in Melbourne, Victoria and spent his childhood in north-eastern Victoria. He graduated in law from the University of Melbourne and at the time of his election to the Victorian Legislative Assembly in 1892, had built a substantial legal practice. He quickly became an influential member of the Victorian Government, serving as Solicitor-General and Attorney-General, and acting as Premier on a number of occasions. Isaacs was a Victorian representative at the Australasian Federal Convention of 1897-98, and played an active role in the "Yes" campaign in the ensuing referendum on the Constitution Bill.

In 1901 Isaacs was elected as a Protectionist to represent the federal seat of Indi in the House of Representatives at the first federal election. As Attorney-General in the second Deakin Ministry, he distinguished himself by his energy and capacity for work. He maintained his busy legal practice throughout his service as a federal parliamentarian.

In 1906 Isaacs was appointed as a justice of the High Court of Australia. He remained on the High Court bench for almost 25 years, and attained the office of Chief Justice before being appointed, in 1931, Governor-General of Australia. The first Australian born Governor-General, Isaacs, who was in his mid-70s at the time of his appointment, undertook his duties with zeal and distinction. He retired in 1936.

Isaacs received high honours throughout his career, including membership of the Privy Council in 1921 and several knighthoods.

The electorate of Indi was named after an Aboriginal name for the Murray River.